

Exploration begun for New Hometown Airline

City, Businesses and Airport Authority Continue Efforts for Expanded Services for Columbus

(COLUMBUS) A local group of business leaders have come together to explore starting a new airline based in Columbus. According to the filing made with the Ohio Division of Securities, Skybus Airlines, LLC, has raised \$3.5 million to pursue this venture.

"We are very pleased to see this effort move forward and we are proud to have Columbus business leaders provide the funding to explore starting a new airline in Columbus," said Mayor Michael B. Coleman. "A new airline will help us not only build business and create jobs in Columbus, but also connect our residents to more direct national flights."

Port Columbus International Airport currently has 10 major airlines and their regional affiliates serving 32 non-stop destinations with 330 daily arrivals and departures. The airport is recovering from America West Airline's 2003 decision to reduce daily flights from 49 to 4 in an effort to streamline its operations. Since that time other airlines have added capacity to capitalize on the opportunity but available seats and departures for consumers remain down. Port Columbus finished 2003 with 7.2% fewer passengers than 2002 and is down 14.6% for the first two months of 2004 as compared to the same months in 2003.

"Columbus and a much larger statewide region represent a tremendous market for air carriers," said Elaine Roberts, President & CEO of the Columbus Regional Airport Authority. "Port Columbus is highly regarded as easy to access from all points in the state as well as a very convenient facility to use. We are extremely pleased that others are recognizing the strength of our market with a proposal to initiate a hometown airline."

MEDIA NOTE: Due to restrictions imposed upon Skybus Airlines, LLC, by federal and state securities laws, employees of the City of Columbus and the Columbus Regional Airport Authority cannot discuss this matter any further at this time.